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ABSTRACT

This paper demonstrates how the Digital Video Disc (DVD) video player, with or without computer technology, can provide powerful and multiple functions within the college classroom (particularly the English-as-a-Second-Language classroom), enabling the teacher to design various film activities, create different subtitles for different ability level students, and facilitate students' increased participation in the content selection and the design of learning activities. The paper describes DVD technology and offers techniques and guidelines for using it and for conducting learner-centered, cooperative teaching. It presents a sample DVD learning activity involving the film, "You've Got Mail." The main goals of the paper are to encourage more teachers to use high-tech audiovisual equipment in the learner-centered laboratory classroom and to urge school administrators to equip modern laboratory classrooms with high-technology that can improve students language learning and overall academic performance. (SM)

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ED 462 010

Manipulating DVD Technology to Empower Your Teaching

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College laboratory classrooms are increasingly being equipped with hi-tech multimedia equipment such as computer and laser playback technology. But the academic effectiveness of the equipment remains unexplored. This presentation demonstrates how the DVD-Video player combined with or without computer technology can provide powerful and multiple functions for the classroom, enable the teacher to design various film activities, create different subtitles for different ability level students, and encourage students' participation in the content selection and the design of learning activities. This paper provides techniques and guidelines for using this technology and for conducting a learner-centered cooperative teaching practice. The main goals of this paper are twofold: 1.) to draw more teachers toward the use of hi-tech audiovisual equipment in the laboratory classroom, showing them how this can empower their teaching effectiveness; and 2.) to urge school administrators to equip modern laboratory classrooms with hi-tech technology that will improve students' language learning and overall academic performance.

INTRODUCTION

Since 1997, Digital Video (or "Versatile") Disc (DVD) technology has been getting more and more mature and stable, and DVD software has been booming on the market in the last two years. It can be expected that the distribution of DVDs will increase beyond our expectation over the next few years. As Dai (1998) predicts, the beginning of the 21st Century may well be the age of DVDs. But the driving force behind the development of DVD technology has been the entertainment industry, not the academic field. The effectiveness of DVD equipment still has not yet been empirically explored and examined in the EFL classroom.

This paper demonstrates how the DVD-Video player, in possible combination with computer technology, can provide powerful and multiple functions for the EFL classroom. This technology can help teachers design various listening and speaking

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activities, create different subtitles for different proficiency level students, and encourage learners to get more involved with content selection and class activity design.

A primary goal of this paper is to encourage teachers who are already teaching in well-equipped hi-tech classrooms to make greater use of the available DVD equipment, demonstrating for them how this audiovisual technology can be used in conjunction with activities built upon learner-centered cooperative teaching principles. This paper also aims to counsel school administrators who may be considering whether or not to invest in modern laboratory classrooms equipped with DVD technology and accompanying software.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The history of the DVD is brief but fascinating. DVD technology made its debut in the early 1990s, but it was not until 1997—when legal squabbling over standards and copyright-protection issues were resolved—that the technology began to gain popularity with the general public. Even before it caught on with the average consumer, however, researchers in the fields of technology and education were singing the praises of the new technology. In his initial introduction to the giant capacities and multiple functions of DVD technology, Halfhill (1996) undertakes a comparison of the structure and capacity between Compact Discs (CDs) and DVDs. He calls DVD a *Goliath* in the industry, as the technology makes the transition from megabytes to gigabytes.

Taiwan-based educator Leung (1998) advocates the use of DVD equipment based on his comparison of the quality, capacity and functionality of DVDs in comparison with the earlier laser–based technologies of CDs and LDs (Laser Discs). He also notes the functions of DVD-Audio, DVD-R, DVD-Ram and DVD-ROM. (A more complete explanation of these various DVD formats is offered below.) Meanwhile, Dai (1998) offers an introduction to the development of DVD technology and the diverse specifications of the current six regions for DVD hardware and software. For ongoing developments in the field of DVD technology, educators in Taiwan may also wish to peruse the pages of *DVDInfo*, a commercial publication that made its premiere in December 1999.

What exactly is it that makes DVD technology so popular with those who are already familiar and comfortable with various developments in audiovisual playback? What follows is a brief look at the various functions and formats that fall under the umbrella of DVD hardware and software. For the purpose of this paper, it should be explained that the acronym "DVD" applies to both the *hardware*—the DVD playback

equipment—and the *software*—the actual discs containing the digital information for playback. For the sake of distinguishing between the two, the general DVD acronym will be dropped in favor of more specific descriptive terms.

DVD TECHNOLOGY

DVD was first defined as "digital video disc," and because of its versatility it was later given a nickname "digital versatile disc" (Halfhill, 1996). Each disc can hold four hours' worth of video image. The image and audio quality are much improved than the already admirable quality from the laser disc. Best of all, one disc can carry many different language subtitles, many spoken languages, multi-angles, and multi-screens. Therefore, a film can be used to teach Chinese, Korean, French, Spanish, German, Cantonese, Japanese, Thai, Malaysian, etc. Each disc also includes other optional materials, such as background on the actors, director, production notes, songs, interviews with actors, etc. (Leung, 1998; Dai, 1998, Lin and Fox, 1999).

All DVD players and DVD discs, which have dominated the global market, are divided into six regions: **Region 1** for the United States and Canada; **Region 2** for Japan, Europe, and South Africa; **Region 3** for Taiwan, South Korean, Hong Kong, and East Asian; **Region 4** for New Zealand, Australia, and Latin America; **Region 5** for Africa, Middle Asia, and the Soviet Union; and **Region 6** for Mainland China (Dai, 1998). But, most DVD players sold in Taiwan have been reconstructed to provide playback of discs from all regions. The software can be played in a single-unit player as well as a PC equipped with a DVD-ROM drive. DVD software has been sprouting island-wide over these past two years, with most new feature-length film releases provided in the DVD format. Affecting this has been the downward trend in prices for both players and discs.

The Structure and Capacity of DVDs. DVDs are the same physical size as CDs or VCDs, but their storage capacity is 4.7 to 17GB per disc compared to the 553-MB to 682-MB capacity in CDS.

Some Terms Related to DVDs. In addition to the discs, playback units and DVD-ROM (read only memory) drives, there are others related to DVD-based technologies that need introduction:

1. **DVD-Audio.** Designed to replace the CD player, which is still not as technologically "mature" as DVD-player, the DVD-Audio emphasizes the quality of the audio soundtrack. Some DVD-Audios can also include the functions of the DVD-Video players. However, the general market price is still somewhat expensive by many standards.
2. **DVD-R**. This is a write-once format similar to CD-R. The DVD-R drive

can record data by burning spots in dye, but because of some of the limitations of this material, the single layer DVD-R discs may have less capacity than a single-layer DVD-ROM. Also, this technology is not suitable for making dual-layer discs (Halfhill, 1996).

3. **DVD-Ram.** This technology can encode the data on a re-writable phase-change material. They can be rewritten from once to four times, depending on the format. But, it has even less capacity than DVD-R; nevertheless, it shows more promise for dual layering than DVD-R.

The following chart (adapted from Halfhill, 142) shows the various DVD physical formats.

DVD Physical Formats

DVD format	*Capacity (120-mm disc)*
DVD-ROM: one side, one layer	4.7 GB
DVD-ROM: one side, two layers	8.5 GB
DVD-ROM: two sides, one layer	9.4 GB
DVD-ROM: two sides, two layers	17 GB
DVD-R: one side, one layer	3.9 GB
DVD-R: two sides, one layer	7.8 GB
DVD-RAM: one side, one layer	2.6 GB
DVD-Ram: two sides, one layer	5.2 GB

4. **DVD Caption Decoder.** In order to adopt DVD technology in the language learning classroom, sometimes a DVD caption decoder, computer, and computer interface are needed. The decoder can produce various subtitles for on-screen display, enabling the simultaneous broadcast of multiple subtitles (such as English and Chinese). This capability has definite advantages for the language acquisition classroom, as the use of both L1 and L2 subtitles offered together on the screen has been demonstrated as enhancing student motivation and aiding learners' listening skills, including vocabulary recognition skills (Lin, 1999).
5. **Computer Interface.** For the purpose of downloading film transcripts (the English subtitles) from the disc onto a computer, it is necessary to use a computer interface.

BASIC FUNCTIONS OF DVD TECHNOLOGY

For those teachers who consider themselves technophobes, DVD technology may seem too complicated. But, armed with a few basic operating techniques, anybody can handle the seemingly fancy or complicated functions. What follows are the basic skill functions necessary for the successful operation of DVD playback technology.

1. **The Subtitles Function.** This allows the user to select any of the subtitles already available on a given disc. Press the "Subtitles" button and use the guide arrow to choose the desired subtitle option. If two or more simultaneous subtitles are needed on the screen, as mentioned previously, a DVD caption decoder will be needed. The "subtitles" button will serve to choose other subtitles.
2. **The Language Function**. This allows for a selection of the output language type. Unfortunately, it can only produce the language as labeled on the cover page of the disc. There are always limitations according to each product sold.
3. **The Advance Function**. The use of this function enables the user to skip to individual scenes or chapters on the disc. Most DVDs include a scene index, providing easily location of the required scene/chapter. The button labeled "Go To" or "Forward" typically provides the advance function. It is always recommended, but not always possible, that teachers undertake a private viewing of the film before showing it in class. If by chance a film must be used in class that is new to teachers, the *Advance Function* may prove quite useful in speeding past potentially undesirable scenes of gore or explicit sexuality. This function may also prove useful for various student-centered activities, such as asking learners to forward the film to a favorite scene that they can then build upon in a variety of methods.
4. **The Scene Repeat Function.** Typically the property of the button labeled "A-B," this very powerful function enables instructors to continuously repeat a single scene. Unless the instructor has another set of equipment for editing shorter clips to be used in class, this function can help produce repeated scene showings with different subtitles. To use this key, press the "A-B" option at the start of a scene, and again at the end. The selected scene will be repeated until this button is hit again to release the function. In doing this, you can play this clip as many times as you like, and each time you can change the subtitles. Students report that viewing a video first with Chinese subtitles, then with English subtitles, and finally without any textual aid, serves to lower anxiety and increase listening comprehension.
5. **The Chapter Repeat Function.** To repeat a selected chapter in its entirety,

the "Repeat" button can be pressed during the initial viewing of the chapter. The function is released when the button is pressed again.

6. **The Freeze Frame Function.** Any film frame can be frozen to display an image for greater examination. This enables an instructor to freeze a character in mid-action or to freeze a facial expression for greater discussion. Scenic moments can be frozen to allow greater vocabulary building, as the student works to describe the scene caught on the screen.

The above can provide six essential functions for the classroom use of DVD technology. For more complicated functions, the menu can provide a full listing of potentials.

INFORMATION ABOUT *YOU'VE GOT MAIL*

When asked to select a favorite from an offering of five discs, students in my classes chose "You've Got Mail" as their favorite film. Some of the reasons for their preference over this film included: 1.) Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan are my favorite actor and actress; they are a perfect match; 2.) It's a romantic comedy; I can learn English better in a fun and relaxing atmosphere; 3.) The dialogues in this film are mostly daily life conversation dialogues, simple and colloquial; 4.) I want to know more about how to write e-mails; 5.) Some of the songs in this movie are fantastic. "You've Got Mail" is a modern romance in which superstore book chain magnate Joe Fox (Tom Hanks) and cozy children's bookshop owner Katheleen (Meg Ryan) are anonymous cyber pals who fall in love. They do not know that they are combative business rivals.

This DVD disc provides some behind-the-scenes information, such as the conversation with the director Nora Ephon, and an interactive "Discover New York's Upper West Side" tour of the New York City. It also includes the music-only audio soundtrack. Moreover, when used with a computer with a DVD-ROM, this disc enables one to do a number of other things. For example, it enables one to use the original call sheets to reach the scenes in the film; to compare key scenes with those in two previous screen versions of the story; to listen to songs from the film; to read all the mail between the characters; to view cast interviews and the Biography Gallery; and to visit the web site chat rooms.

TEACHING ACTIVITIES FOR *YOU'VE GOT MAIL*

Whole-film Viewing. This extensive learner-centered viewing activity aims at motivating students by showing the complete story, getting them involved in

choosing interesting and meaningful scenes for intensive activities, and creating some questions or discussion topics for speaking activities. The rationale for getting students involved in selecting scenes and creating questions is based on the learner-centered cooperative and negotiating theories that advocate placing greater responsibility on students in the process of learning. It is important to remember that oftentimes the teacher's perceptions of what is interesting and important may not necessarily match those of the students' (Liversidge 2000). That is why when viewing *You've Got Mail* in its entirety, my students were assigned to take notes on the scenes/chapters which they felt were more suitable for listening and speaking activities. Another more challenging task for them was to design, from viewing, some questions and discussion topics for discussion or debate. The whole film viewing activity may be regarded by some (Stempleski and Tomalin, 1990; Katchen, 1996; Chiang, 1997) as too time-consuming. But if you do not give students the chance to know the full plot, but only "tease" them with short excerpts, how can you meet their emotional and motivational needs through film watching? Viewing complete films, argues Shea (1999), can result in students' recognizing

> the emotional and narrative dynamic of the video as a story about important things in human experiences, aesthetic and ethical things like dreams, imaginations and commitment, things that drive language ultimately stimulate students to learn it in the first place.

Most students responded that use of *both* the entire film and abbreviated excerpts (with appropriate activities for each) not only motivated them but also enhanced the effectiveness of their language learning (Lin, 2000). Occasional viewing can help to reach students' emotions, motivate them and to provide a varied quality of input for language acquisition (Krashen, 1987).

For those teachers who are already busy with preparing teaching materials, but without much time remaining for previewing the films, it is a good chance to encourage students to do it instead. The films can be "abused" if the teacher offers only whole film viewings without any pre- or post-viewing activities, or any intensive learning activities at all in the classroom. Nor should the teacher feel guilty about showing the film recommended by the students or viewing it for the first time in class. Even under such conditions both students and teachers can use the viewing time to write down some of the scenes for later activities or other classes.

Questions and Discussion Activities. Normally the teacher would provide students, either before or after viewing, with a list of questions and topics for post-viewing discussion. But, those items mostly formulated from the teacher's angle

are not necessarily what the students are enthusiastic to talk or discuss about. Therefore, it is better to give them chances to bring up their own questions. Should they miss some of the important ones, the teacher can make the addition.

Here is how the learner-centered theories are put into practice in my film teaching. Students in each group needed to negotiate among themselves to obtain two to three favorite questions or topics and present and articulate clearly them in front of the class. Sometimes when the presenter did not articulate his/her questions understandably, the teacher had to step in to repeat them. From the film *You've Got Mail*, while some students brought up some detailed fact questions about the plot, others did the related topics in the film, such as "Do you think that making friends through the internet is a wise and advisable policy?"; "Please share your experiences on making friends through e-mail with us."; "Is it appropriate or safe to meet your cyber pal?"; "How to keep away from being cheated or hurt in meeting with your cyber pal?"; "Is there true love existing in the internet romance?"; and "According to your opinion, what are the reasons why young people are quite crazy about making friends through internet?"

What a joy it was to see students enthusiastically involved in discussion and debate. Students were rendered the greatest freedom in the proceedings of activity unless they needed some help on unfamiliar vocabulary and expressions. Sometimes some Chinese was allowed to convey their ideas more completely and clearly. This was perhaps the only drawback of this kind of activity. The discussion was unexpectedly keen, especially about how they personally made friends through the Internet. One of the students brought into the class a roar of surprises and laughter, and some good advice as well. He told us how with about ten cyber friends he made up his status for different genders, age and names. He had a lot fun with his experience but also encountered some troubles. He concluded his confession with advising the female classmates to be cautious about making friends through the Internet.

Listening Activities. Students voted Chapter 19 "He is not her" and "Just call me Joe" as top two choices of favorite listening clips from *You've Got Mail*. As time was short, we just worked on the former one. The students selected this clip because of the simplicity of dialogues, explicit facial expressions, small number (2) of characters, and clarity of speech. This scene depicted that Joe (Tom Hanks), discovering that his cyber pal was his business rival, showed the least intention to meet her but finally showed up, although without disclosing his real identity. The dialogues between these two characters were quite interesting and easy to understand.

The scripts of the above scene were distributed to the students before viewing this clip for the second time with only English subtitles, since they had seen this scene

with both English and Chinese subtitles. Some students raised their hands to ask some unfamiliar vocabulary and phrases, even if they completely understood the context. Next they were asked to do practice in pairs on the dialogues from the scene. Students vindicated that saying the dialogues before viewing contributed greatly to their listening comprehension. When viewing the clip with only English subtitles, students were not allowed to look at their scripts. The third time viewing was done with no subtitles for challenging their listening comprehension.

The main reason for such repetition of viewing is to make the authentic spoken dialogues more comprehensible. Both the frequency of repetition and showing order of different subtitles, however, can and should be adjusted according to students' proficiency levels and teachers' teaching designs.

CONCLUSION

It may be too soon to say that the DVDs will replace VHSs or VCDs in a few years, but it can be accurately predicted that the DVD technology is gaining popularity and getting increasingly advanced. Most newly released Hollywood films, for instance, are in the DVD format. Likewise, the DVD software in other fields will also boom in the market pretty soon. There will be easier access to DVDs. The prices of DVD players and DVD discs will become more reasonably affordable. The only thing we need perhaps is to do more research on exploring the use and implementation of DVDs for the language learning classrooms.

The schools should have DVD equipment in the language laboratory classroom and hold various practical workshops to those teachers interested in using this hi-tech equipment. The language teacher must keep abreast of the DVD technology, as it becomes indispensable to the modern classroom. What has been examined in this paper regarding DVD and its application to the language classroom are merely some of the basic ones. It is hoped that teachers would make efforts in exploring the advanced functions of the DVD technology. In conclusion, let us also encourage all teachers to try to start film teaching through negotiating and cooperating with the students who are willing to take more responsibility on their learning by taking part in the selection and designing of film materials. Although in the foreseeable future the DVD technology will not replace the teacher, it does offer a considerable aid that empowers teaching.

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Manipulating DVD Technology to Empower Your Teaching

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I. The advantages of using DVD technology:

1. Better visual and audio quality;

2. Capacity;

3. Durability & easy to store;

4. Various functions to facilitate the teaching;

5. The flexibility on various subtitles and languages;

6. The price getting more and more reasonable (NT $9000 above for DVD player, NT$ 99 above for discs).

7. Availability (More than 700 films on the market)

II. Region Division:

Region 1: The United States, Canada.
Region 2: Japan; Europe, south Africa.
Region 3: Taiwan, South Korean, Hong Kong, East Asian.
Region 4: New Zealand, Australia, Latin American.
Region 5: Africa, Middle Asia, the Soviet Union.
Region 6: Mainland China.

- Caption Decoder—Producing dual subtitles
- Two Free Movie Script web-sites:
  1. Drew's script-O-Rama (http://www.script-o-rama.com/)
  2. Nemonic's Unlimited Movie Script & Screenplay Page (http://www.geocities.com/)

III. Various Functions:

1. The Subtitles Function

2. The Language Function

3. The Advance Function

4. The Scene Repeat Function

5. The Chapter Repeat Function

6. The Freeze Frame Function

IV. The Various activities for "You've Got Mail"

1. Whole film viewing (viewing, note-taking, make questions, discussion)

2. Listening activities: "He Is Not Here" as an example

3. Speaking Activities: Role play

V. Using DVDs to teach songs:

1. Let students view and choose their favorite songs;

2. Students provides the script for their most favorite song;

3. "How do I live" by Trisha Yearwood was chosen as their most favorite one.

Joe: Kathleen Kelly. Hello. What a coincidence.

Kathleen: Yes I do. I'm expecting someone.

Joe: "Pride and Prejudice".

Kathleen: Do you mind?

Joe: I didn't know you were Jane Austen fan. Not that it's a surprise. I bet you read it every year. I bet you just love Jr. Darcy, and that your sentimental heart beats wildly the thought that he and whatever her name is really, honestly and truly going to end up together.

Kathleen: Would you please leave? Please?

Joe: I'll get up as soon as your friend comes. Is he late?

Kathleen: The heroine of Pride and Prejudice is Elizabeth Bennet and she's one of the greatest, most complex characters ever written, not that you would know.

Joe: As a matter of fact I've read it.

Kathleen: Well, good for you.

Joe: I think you'd discover if you really know me.

Kathleen: If I really knew you, I know what I would find—instead of a brain, a cash register, instead of a heart, a bottom line.

Joe: What is it?

Kathleen: I just had a breakthrough, and I have to thank you for it. For the first time in my life, when confronted with a horrible, insensitive person I actually knew what I wanted to say and I said it.

Joe: I think you have a gift for it. I t was a splendid mixture of poetry and meanness.

Kathleen: Meanness? Let me tell you—

Joe: Don't misunderstand me, I'm just paying you a compliment.

Kathleen: Why are you doing this?

Joe: What have we had:? A red, no, crimson rose, tucked into the pages. Something you read about in a book, no doubt. One of those books with a lady in a nightgown on the cover about to throw herself off a cliff.

Kathleen: Give it to me.

Joe: It's a joke to you, isn't it?

Kathleen: Everything's a joke to you. Please leave. I beg you.

Joe: You know what the handkerchief reminds me of? The first day I met you—

Kathleen: The first day you lied to me—

Joe: I didn't lie to you—

Kathleen: You did too--

I thought all that fox stuff was so charming. F-O-X.

Joe: I never lied about it—

Kathleen: "Joe. Just call me Joe." As if you were one of those stupid 22-year-old girls with no last name. "Hi, I'm Kimberley." "Hi, I'm Janice." What's wrong with them? Don't they know you're supposed to have last names. It's like they're a whole generation of cocktail waitresses.

I am not a stupid 22-year-old girl—

Joe: That's not what I meant— And when I said the thing about the Price Club and cans of olive oil, that wasn't what I meant either.

Kathleen: Oh, you poor sad multimillionaire. I feel so sorry for you.

Joe: I am going to take a wild guess that this isn't him, either. Who is he, I wonder. Not, I gather, the world's greatest living expert on Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, but someone else entirely. Will you be you mean to him too? Will you start out sweet as sugar candy and then suddenly, miraculously, like a bolt from the blue, find that sharp little tongue of yours?

Kathleen: No, I won't. because the man who's coming here tonight is completely unlike you. The man who is coming here is kind and funny—he has the most wonderful sense of humor—

Joe: But he's not here.

Kathleen: If he's not here, he has a reason, because there is not a cruel or careless bone in his body. I can't expect you to know anything about a person like that. You've nothing but a suit.